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LETTERS FROM A TEACHER TO HER YOUNG FEMALE FRIEND, JUST
ABOUT COMMENCING TO KEEP SCHOOL.

No. VII.

My dear L— : When you have made your scholars understand all the lines upon the globe, and the phenomena occasioned by the inclination of the earth's axis, by its revolution upon this axis, &c., I would speak to them of the atmosphere that encompasses it. This atmosphere, tell them, is a thin, fluid substance, by means of which the rays of light are refracted and reflected, and equally dispersed in all directions. Hence the heavens appear bright in the daytime; for without this atmosphere, only that portion would be illuminated in which the sun shines; the rest would appear as dark as the night, and the stars would be seen in the day; neither would there be any twilight, but, at sunset, an instantaneous transition from sunshine to the blackest darkness; and at sunrise, again, from darkness to the blaze of a partial day. This atmosphere also constitutes the air we breathe, and without which we could not exist as we are now created; and in it are produced the various phenomena of thunder, lightning, wind, rain, snow, meteors, &c.

The atmosphere is most dense at the surface of the earth; it increases in rarefaction as it rises, till it becomes unfit to support human life. Its precise height is not known, but, by calculation, it is found sufficiently dense at the height of forty-four miles to reflect the rays of the sun, and hence to produce twilight. Its weight is immense, for the quantity that presses on a person of moderate size is calculated at 32,400 lbs. avoirdupois, or nearly 14½ tons. It would, of course, crush him to atoms, were not its pressure equal on all sides, and were it not counterbalanced by the spring of the atmosphere within his frame. It is so subtle that it penetrates all substances, and the pressure is equalized over all bodies, from within and from without, from above and from below, or destruction would be the immediate consequence of its weight. A column of this atmosphere reaching to the top of it, (or about forty-four miles,) the base of which is a square inch, weighs fifteen pounds. Therefore every inch of the surface of our bodies sustains a weight of fifteen pounds; and the exact pressure upon any individual may be ascertained, by finding the number of square inches on the surface of his body, and multiplying that number by fifteen. In this way it has been ascertained that the weight of the whole atmosphere upon the earth, is more than five thousand billions

of tons, or a globe of lead sixty miles in diameter. That portion or layer of it, which is near the surface of the earth, bears the weight of that which is above it. Being compressed, therefore, by the weight of what is above it, the air must exist in a condensed state near the surface of the earth; while in the upper regions, where there is no pressure, it is highly rarefied. Our lungs are so constituted as to breathe that condensed state of it, which exists near the surface of the earth. Travellers, who have ascended the loftiest mountains on the globe, have passed into a state of the atmosphere so highly rarefied, as to cause great pain in their lungs; and the blood sometimes oozes from their ears, mouths, noses, and even skin, from the bursting of small blood-vessels. Instruments have been invented to measure the weight of the atmosphere, its heat, and its moisture.

The barometer, or weather-glass, measures the weight or pressure of the atmosphere, and foretells thus the variations of the weather. In valleys, or low situations, this pressure will of course be greater than on high mountains. The mercury in the barometer will rise highest in dry weather, because the air is then heaviest, the pressure in this instrument being from below. In wet weather, it is in fact much lighter, though it appears to our senses heavier.

The thermometer measures the heat of the atmosphere. The mercury within it expands in a warm temperature, and rises in the tube; in a colder temperature, it contracts, and of course sinks.

The hygrometer measures the degree of moisture in the atmosphere, at any particular time. It may be constructed of any thing which contracts and expands by the moisture of the air,—such as most kinds of wood, catgut, twisted cord, the beard of wild oats, &c.

By the action of the sun's heat upon the surface of the earth, whether land or water, immense quantities of vapor are raised into the atmosphere, supplying materials for all the water which is returned to the earth, in the various forms of dew, fog, rain, snow, and hail. At night, when the earth becomes colder than the atmosphere, the moisture in the atmosphere condenses, in the form of *dew*, on the ground, or on other surfaces. This process is most perceptible, and the dew most abundant, in tropical climates, where the nightly dews are so heavy as to supply the place of rain, during several months of the year. Plants, and even trees, are completely saturated with the moisture.

When the atmosphere is colder than the earth, the vapor which arises from the ground, or from a body of water, is condensed, and becomes visible. This is *fog*. *Clouds* are nothing but vapor, condensed by the cold of the upper regions of the atmosphere.

When these bodies of vapor become too heavy to be sustained by the air, they fall in *rain*. *Snow* and *hail* are produced by the sudden cooling of large quantities of vapor, and differ from rain only by the degree of cold which produces them. When the atmosphere is thrown into motion, it is *wind*, which is warm, cold, or moist, according to the temperature of the climates where it is generated.

In northern climates, like ours, the north and north-west winds are cold, because they blow from regions covered with frost and snow. The south wind is warm and moist, because it blows from the tropics, and is laden with the soft vapors of those regions. The east winds, on eastern coasts, like ours, are cold and damp, because they blow over

a wide surface of ocean, and are laden with saline vapors. Our west winds are dry and genial, because they blow from a wide extent of country, of more moderate temperature than our own.

The phenomena of sound are also produced by the vibrations of the atmosphere. When a bell is struck under a receiver exhausted of air by means of an air-pump, it conveys no sound; and even if the bell is struck in a receiver full of air, but this receiver is placed under another exhausted of air, no sound will be communicated to one listening outside of the latter.

Sounds are louder when the air surrounding the sonorous body is dense, than when it is in a rarefied state. Sound of any kind is transmitted to a greater distance in cold, clear weather, than in a warm, sultry day. On the tops of mountains, where the air is rare, the human voice can be heard only at the distance of a few rods, and the firing of a gun sounds scarcely louder than the cracking of a whip.

All sound passing through the air, moves at the rate of 1142 feet in a second of time. The distance of a thunder cloud may be very nearly ascertained by counting the seconds between the appearance of the lightning and the noise of the thunder, and multiplying them by 1142 feet. If the light of a gun, fired at sea, be seen half a minute before the report is heard, the vessel must be at the distance of about six miles and a half.

The atmosphere is a better conductor of sound when it is humid than when it is dry. A bell can be more distinctly heard just before a rain, and in the night than in the day, because the air is then generally damp.

Much more that is interesting and perfectly within the comprehension of children of eight years of age, might be said about the atmosphere; but this is sufficient to be told in connection with the geography lessons.

You must not be satisfied, my dear L., with these *sketchy* accounts of things. You may be able to repeat them with some degree of intelligence; but, to teach well, one must be thoroughly imbued with the very principle of the subject, whatever it may be. You must endeavor to procure books upon such subjects as this, for instance; in which the matter is treated elaborately, and illustrated by many experiments, which you can familiarly describe to your pupils.

The compressibility and elasticity possessed by the atmosphere and other aëriform gases, so different from any power possessed by liquids, may be illustrated by many experiments, which can be understood almost as well when described as when seen. You may inflate a bladder in the presence of your scholars; you may describe the compression of the air in the top of a diving-bell; the simultaneous fall of the feather and the guinea in a receiver exhausted of air; the adhering of the brim of two cups from which the air has been exhausted; the pressure of a wine-glass upon the hand after the air has been partially expelled from it by a little bit of lighted paper,—which experiment shows also the pressure of the air within the veins of the hand;—but you must either have seen such experiments, or made yourself so familiar with them by study as to be able to explain them lucidly and with animation;—and you must be ready, too, to answer all objections, and account for exceptions. You must cultivate in yourself such a power of

doing this, that your bright scholars, at least, will be all ready and eager to take the words out of your mouth when you repeat such explanations, and become little orators upon the subject themselves.

Children are always eager to hear about the processes of nature; and the world is a thousand times more alive and speaking to them, when to the inward stores of the conceptive faculty, whose flow we cannot trace, is added the knowledge of the attributes of things around them.

M.

LEXINGTON NORMAL SCHOOL.

[From the Connecticut Common School Journal.]

As this school, [The Lexington Normal School,] is the most interesting experiment now making on this side of the Atlantic, we subjoin a letter from the Principal, in reply to some inquiries respecting its organization and condition.

LEXINGTON, January 1, 1841.

DEAR SIR: I very cheerfully comply with your request to communicate to you information in regard to the Normal School in this place. I will take up the points on which you have desired information, in the order you have named them.

1. *Direction and Inspection.*—The school is under the immediate direction and inspection of a Board of Visitors, chosen from and by the Board of Education. The administration of the school has, in fact, been almost entirely under the direction of the Principal. Of rules and orders regulating the terms of admission, the course and term of study, &c., &c., I have received nothing more than what is published in the number of the Common School Journal for February, 1839, to which I refer you.

2. *Building.*—The Normal School is an edifice fifty feet in length, and forty in breadth, two stories high, with suitable out-buildings, pleasantly situated in the angle of two roads near the old battle-field, enclosed in a yard of convenient dimensions, which is ornamented with trees and shrubbery. In the basement are a kitchen, dining-room, washroom, and woodhouse, together with storerooms; on the ground floor, are a parlor and bedroom for steward, a sittingroom for the young ladies, (boarders,) and one schoolroom; in the second story are five dormitories with a schoolroom; and in the attic, four dormitories. The house will accommodate about twenty boarders;—the two schoolrooms will seat from seventy-five to eighty scholars; the lower room is now used for the model school. There is access to the schoolrooms from the main body of the building, as well as from without.

This building is private property, now held as security, by the trustees of the ministerial fund in this place, by whom it is leased to the Board of Education for a moderate rent. When the Board of Education were seeking a suitable location for a Normal School in this section of the Commonwealth, said trustees offered this building for their accommodation; and they, together with other friends of education in this place, pledged themselves to raise \$1000 in behalf of the school. The building and premises may be worth from \$5000 to \$7000.

3. *Revenue.*—A portion of \$10,000 from private munificence, and of an equal sum granted by the Legislature, is, I believe, the entire amount of funds. Scholars pay their own board, (\$2 per week,) and meet all incidental charges, such as for fuel, cleaning, &c. Class-books are mostly supplied by private munificence. Tuition is gratis.

4. *Inventory.*—All the furniture of the boarding-house establishment belongs to the steward, who has the use of the building gratis, furnishes it at his own risk and expense, and gets his pay from his boarders;—he cannot, however, charge more than \$2 per week for board, including washing.

The school has two stoves for heating, two maps, a pair of globes, an apparatus for illustrating the most important principles of natural philosophy and astronomy, a small library of about 100 volumes, chiefly works on education and for reference,—all worth from \$600 to \$800.

5. *Maintenance.*—Reference to what I have said under numbers 3 and 4.

6. *Teachers.*—The Principal is the only teacher at present in the school; he is paid by a fixed salary. The model school is taught by the pupils of the Normal School.

7. *Number of pupils.*—The whole number that has been in the school is forty-one;

the greatest number at any time, thirty-four. In the model school, thirty has been the usual number.

8. *What is required of applicants for admission.*—For an answer to this, allow me to refer you to the School Journal, as before.

9. *Studies pursued, and text-books, art of teaching, &c.*—For the full course contemplated, I refer you to the Journal, as above. The branches that have been *actually* taken up are the following, viz.: all the common branches, *particularly* and *fully*; together with Composition, Geometry, Algebra, Physiology; Natural, Intellectual, and Moral Philosophy; Natural History, Botany, Political Economy, Book-Keeping, Vocal Music, and the *art of Teaching*. The books used in the school are Worcester's Dictionary, and Worcester's Fourth Book, Abbot's Teacher, Russell's First Lessons, Testament, Grund's Geometry, Colburn's Sequel and Algebra, Wayland's Moral Philosophy, Newman's Political Economy, Hitchcock's Book-Keeping, Combe's Constitution of Man, Combe's Physiology, Brigham's Mental Excitement, Smellie's Natural History, Comstock's Botany, Abercrombie's Mental Philosophy, Combe's Moral Philosophy, Story's Constitution of the United States, Newman's Rhetoric, Hayward's Physiology, Day's Algebra; Scientific Class-Book, by Johnson, for the various branches of natural philosophy.

You ask for a full account of my manner of instruction in the *art of Teaching*. This it is not easy to give. From what I say, you may get some idea of what I *attempt*, and of the *manner* of it. Two things I have aimed at, especially in this school. 1. To teach *thoroughly* the principles of the several branches studied, so that the pupils may have a *clear* and *full understanding* of them. 2. To teach the pupils, by my own *example*, as well as by *precepts*, the *best way of teaching the same things* effectually to others. I have four different methods of recitation. 1st, by question and answer; 2d, by conversation; 3d, by calling on one, two, three, more or less, to give an analysis of the whole subject contained in the lesson; and 4th, by requiring written analyses, in which the *ideas* of the author are stated in the *language* of the pupil. I do not mean that these are all practised at the same exercise. The students understand that, at all the recitations, they are at perfect liberty to suggest queries, doubts, opinions. At all the recitations we have more or less of discussion. Much attention is paid to the *manner* in which the pupils *set forth*, or *state* their positions. I am ever mingling, or attempting to mingle, at these exercises, theory and example; frequently putting the inquiry to them, not only, "How do you understand such and such a statement?" but, "How would you express such and such a sentiment, or explain such a principle, or illustrate such a position to a class, which you may be teaching?" "Let me," I say to them, "hear your statements, or witness your modes of illustrating and explaining." In this connection, I frequently call them to the black-board for visible representation. They make the attempt; I remark upon their manner of doing it, and endeavor to show them in what respect it may be improved. Sometimes, instead of reciting the lesson directly to me, I ask them to imagine themselves, for the time, acting in the *capacity of teachers*, to a class of young pupils, and to adopt a style suitable for such a purpose. At many of our recitations, more than half the time is spent with reference to teaching "*the art of teaching*." Besides delivering to the school a written *Formal Lecture* once a week, in which I speak of the qualifications, motives, and duties of teachers, the discipline, management, and instruction of schools, and the *manner* in which the various branches should be taught, I am every day, in conversations, or a familiar sort of lectures, taking up and discussing more *particularly* and *minutely*, some point or points suggested by the exercises or occurrences, it may be, of the day, relating to the *internal operations* of the schoolroom, or to physical, moral, or intellectual education;—I say much about the views and motives of teachers, and the motives by which they should attempt to stimulate their pupils. And here I would state, that my theory goes to the entire exclusion of the *premium and emulation system*, and of corporal punishment. My confidence in it is sustained and strengthened by a full and fair experiment for more than one year in a public school composed of seventy scholars of both sexes. I am constantly calling up real or supposed cases, and either asking the pupils what they would do in such case, or stating to them what I would do myself, or both. As a specimen of such questions, take the following, viz.: On going into a school as teacher, what is the first thing you would do? How will you proceed to bring to order, and arrange your school? Will you have many rules, or few? Will you announce beforehand a code of laws, or make special rules as they may be needed? What *motives* do you purpose to appeal to, and what *means* will you adopt to make your pupils interested in their studies? What method will you adopt to teach spelling, reading, arithmetic? What will you do with the perseveringly idle and troublesome? What will you do if your scholars quarrel? lie? swear? What will you do if a scholar tells you he *won't* do as he is directed? If a question in any ordinary lesson, say arithmetic, comes up, which you cannot solve readily, what will be your resort?

Should you be chiefly ambitious to teach *much*, or to teach thoroughly? How would you satisfy yourself that your teaching is thorough, effectual? To what branches shall you attach most importance, and why? Will you aim chiefly to exercise the *faculties*, or communicate instruction? Besides these daily discussions or conversations, we have a *regular debate* every Saturday, in which the principles involved in these and similar questions are discussed.

Reading I teach by oral inculcation of the principles, as contained in Porter's Rhetorical Reader, (which strike me as in the main correct,) and by example, reading myself before the whole class; hearing the pupils read, and then reading the same piece myself, pointing out their faults, and calling upon them to read again and again, and even the third and fourth time. They also read to each other in my presence. This is a most difficult art to teach. Very few good readers are to be found, either in our schools or elsewhere. Spelling I teach both orally and by *writing* from the reading lesson; for I think each method has its advantages. Orthography has not yet received quite its merited attention in our schools. *Most* persons in business life have to *write*; few, comparatively, are called upon to read publicly; for this reason it is more important to be a correct speller than a fine reader.

I have adopted no text-book in teaching geography. Worcester's is *chiefly* used. My method has been to give out a subject, (a particular country, e. g.,) for examination. The class make search, using what maps and books they have at command, and get all the information of every kind they can, statistical, historical, geographical, of the people, manners, religion, government, business, &c., and at the recitation we have the *results* of their researches. Giving to each a separate subject, I sometimes require the pupils to make an imaginary voyage, or journey, to one, two, three, or more countries, and give an account of every thing on their return. If I were to teach geography to a class of *young beginners*, I should commence with the town in which they live.

In grammar I have adopted no particular text-book. I am teaching a class of beginners in the model school without a book.

In moral instruction we use both Wayland and Combe; and our recitations are conducted as above described. There are no subjects in which scholars manifest more interest than in questions of morals. This I have noticed in all schools. It shows how easy it would be to do what is so much needed, if the teachers are disposed; viz., to cultivate the *moral faculties*. In connection with reading the Scriptures at the opening of the school in the morning, it is my practice to remark on points of practical duty, as far as I can go on common ground.

10. *Annexed school, or model school.*—This school consists of thirty pupils, of both sexes, from the age of six to ten, inclusive, taken promiscuously from families in the various districts of the town. The children pay nothing for tuition; find their own books, and bear the incidental expenses. This school is under the general superintendence and inspection of the Principal of the Normal School. After it was arranged, the general course of instruction and discipline being settled, it was committed to the immediate care of the pupils of the Normal School, one acting as superintendent, and two as assistants, for one month in rotation, for all who are thought *prepared* to take a part in its instruction. In this experimental school, the teachers are expected to apply the principles and methods which they have been taught in the Normal School, with liberty to suggest any improvements, which may occur to them. Twice every day the Principal of the Normal School goes into the model school for general observation and direction, spending from one half hour to one hour each visit. In these visits, I either sit and watch the general operations of the school, or listen attentively to a particular teacher and her class, or take a class myself, and let the teacher be a listener and observer. After the exercises have closed, I comment upon what I have seen and heard before the teachers, telling them what I deem good, and what faulty, either in their doctrine or their practice, their theory or their manner. Once or twice each term, I take the whole Normal School with me into the model schoolroom, and teach the model school myself, in the presence of the pupils of the Normal School, they being listeners and observers. In these several ways, I attempt to combine, as well as I can, theory and practice, precept and example. In regard to the materials of which it is composed, and the studies attended to, the model school is as nearly a fac simile of a *common district school*, as one district school is of another. In regard to the discipline and management, I am aware there may be more dissimilarity. The superintendent is not situated precisely as she will be, when placed alone in a proper *district school*. This could not be effected without having several model schools. But, limited as is the field of operation for the superintendent, it is wide enough, as the teachers find, for the development of considerable tact and talent. From the model school we exclude all appeals to fear, premiums, or emulation; and yet we have had good order, and a fair amount of study.

11. *Rules and regulations prescribed by the teacher.*—They are the following:

1st. The school shall commence at 8 o'clock, A. M., and continue till 12 o'clock, allowing one hour for recess; and at 2 o'clock, P. M., and continue till 5 o'clock.

2d. The pupils shall attend constantly and punctually. All instances of lateness or absence shall be accounted for to the satisfaction of the Principal.

3d. During study hours, the pupils shall abstain from all *communication* with each other, and from *whatever* may interrupt their studies or divert their attention.

4th. Scholars shall supply themselves with all necessary books and apparatus. The practice of borrowing and lending shall not obtain in school.

5th. Pupils wishing to leave town shall make known their desire to the Principal.

6th. The pupils shall attend public worship on the Sabbath.

7th. One hour before breakfast, all the interval between school sessions, and between the afternoon sessions and supper, and two and a half hours after supper, may be spent in physical exercise, suitable recreation, and social intercourse. Other hours, until 9 o'clock, P. M., shall be devoted strictly to reading, study, and the business of the school.

12. *Departure from the Normal School, examinations, &c.*—On these points I refer you to the Common School Journal. Four or five scholars left at the close of the last term, for the purpose of taking schools. No examination by the Visitors was held, no formality was passed through, and no certificate has been given. It must not, however, be inferred from this, that they were thought unworthy or deficient.

13. *Suggestions as to modifications of the course pursued.*—With some slight modifications, which I cannot easily make intelligible in a short statement, I shall pursue, the year to come, the same general course as above described.

In all my instructions, and especially in the *model school*, I depend much upon the black-board and *visible illustration*.

Upon the pupils of the Normal School I inculcate, much and often, the idea that their success depends much upon themselves; upon the *motives* with which they take up the profession and pursue it; upon their correct insight into human nature, and their deep, untiring interest to improve it. They must be moved by a *pure and lofty desire* of doing good. They must be intelligent, discerning. They must be firm, consistent, uniformly patient, and uniformly kind.

It would be easy to be more particular, but this communication is already too long; besides, to go *minutely* into a description of my *manner of teaching* the several branches, both in the Normal and model school, would be to write a book, and not a letter simply.

Allow me to express my high gratification in your late visit to the Normal School. You have had much opportunity to see and compare many schools. For any suggestions in regard to what you saw at Lexington for the *improvement* of the school, I would be very thankful. I have undiminished confidence in the feasibility of the plan of Normal Schools, if, sustained by the sentiment of the community, it could be allowed to continue in operation long enough to make a fair experiment. But on *this point* I have increasing fears.

Your obedient and humble servant,

CYRUS PEIRCE,

Principal of the Normal School at Lexington.

We were highly gratified with what we saw and heard, at the visit above alluded to. We know of no institution on this side of the Atlantic, at all comparable with this for the training of teachers for Common Schools. If it is permitted to go down, it will be a burning disgrace, not only to the Legislature which shall refuse to sustain it by liberal appropriations, but to the friends of Common School education generally, who should come forward with their sympathy and co-operation to encourage Mr. Peirce in his interesting but exhausting labors.

In regard to some of the schoolhouses in Massachusetts, we have found that the date of their erection, like that of the pyramids, was lost in remote antiquity.

To show his reverence for knowledge, Mahomet said, the learned man's ink, and the martyr's blood, were equally valuable in the sight of God.

OUR COMMON SCHOOLS.—No. XV.

[From the Norfolk Democrat.]

MR. EDITOR: As our Summer Schools will soon begin, a few remarks suggested by the experience of the past may not be unseasonable. In education, as in every thing else, experience is a good, though usually a neglected teacher. Few learn by the errors and failures of others. As a general rule, we must all pass through the same discipline of circumstances, and profit only by our own losses. Still, a word of caution, suggested by mistakes that we ourselves have made, may not be wholly lost upon others.

Our summer schools are taught by females. This is right. There is in the female mind, habits, and character, an adaptedness to this business. Men cannot come into such close intimacy with youth; have not equal patience, nor the power of such minute and persevering attention. Females, moreover, possess a purity of moral character, and a quickness and delicacy of perception, that peculiarly qualify them for the office of teachers. I would have them so employed. But for their sakes and ours, and for the sake of our children, I would caution them against so early a commencement of this business as has been usual among us. A girl only one or two years from school is too much of a girl still, in most cases, to preside over the instruction of children. It is almost impossible for her to acquire that composedness of character and dignity of manners, that will enable her to maintain the requisite order, and to exercise a wholesome influence over her pupils. Children are greatly affected by manners. Unlike direct instructions, manners are every moment at work,—imperceptibly moulding the character and determining the dispositions. But refined and pleasing manners, though more native to the female sex than to ours, or at least more easily acquired by them than by us, cannot be established without considerable intercourse with the world. We must move from our fireside, and compare our own habits, prejudices, and peculiarities, with what we observe in society. We must rub off the rust that sticks to us at home. From the special circumstances in which we have been educated, there is always a narrowness in our views, and a singularity in our manners, which mark us out from the rest of mankind. And it usually happens that just so far as we differ in these respects from the society about us, we are disagreeable to society; and in proportion to our disagreeableness will be the loss of our influence. In his last report, which I have so often commended to the notice of your readers, Mr. Mann has the following observations:—

“If the manners of a teacher are to be imitated by his pupils,—if he is the glass, at which they ‘do dress themselves,’—how strong is the necessity that he should understand those nameless and innumerable practices, in regard to deportment, dress, conversation, and all personal habits, that constitute the difference between a gentleman and a clown! We can bear some oddity or eccentricity in a friend, whom we admire for his talents, or revere for his virtues; but it becomes quite a different thing, when the oddity or eccentricity is to be a pattern or model, from which fifty or a hundred children are to form their manners.”

These observations are worthy the serious attention of our teachers, and especially of our younger teachers, who are apt to be most regardless of the truths they involve. Manners seldom come under the cognizance of a committee; and, therefore, teachers, who have any conscience, should be more than usually attentive to them. Let our

young women, who intend to follow teaching as a business, remember, that to them, of all others, the cultivation of refined and pleasing manners is an imperious duty.

Again ; a very young woman, just from school, needs a little time to review, and consolidate, and arrange her acquisitions. Experience teaches us that something more is desirable in an instructor, than the amount of learning that will barely enable one to pass through the form of an examination. And an examination is frequently but the *form* of what it ought to be. The instructor should not only know *more* than the child, but *much more* ; should not only be acquainted with the subjects directly taught, but also with many other subjects,—with much collateral learning. This will enable him to furnish abundance of illustrations ; and illustrations are of the utmost consequence to young children. A precept or maxim is often a dead letter to them, until it is illustrated by some apposite anecdote or by some striking example. The teacher must bring from the treasures of his mind, and from the results of his experience, things old and new. And in proportion as he can do this, will he facilitate the progress of his school, and make their studies pleasant as well as profitable.

It is no reproach to our young females that they have not these extensive stores. But the fact furnishes a reason why they should be in no haste to assume the responsible duties of teachers, and a reason why prudential committees should be cautious and discriminating in selecting those to whom such important duties are intrusted. An error here is fruitful of pernicious consequences. An injury is done to the school and to the teacher. More is expected of her than she *can* perform ; and less progress is made in the school than that to which the scholars are justly entitled. It sometimes happens that a general discontent is excited in the whole district, the usefulness of the school diminished, and the teacher's character permanently injured. I think that young women who propose to become teachers would do well to offer their services as assistants to more experienced teachers, for one or two seasons. If they received no wages, they would get something better,—experience, namely, and acquaintance with the details of instruction, and practical skill in the application of their learning. It would be time well spent ; and they could afterwards enter with confidence upon a business for which they would feel themselves qualified. They would, at the same time, increase their stock of knowledge, and their power of successfully employing it. They never can know how crude and ill-digested their knowledge is, till called to use it for the benefit of others.

A word to prudential committees. If you consult the interests of the school, you will not engage very young and inexperienced teachers for the ensuing summer. They may be hired cheap, but they will prove dear. They may possibly pass examination ; but there must necessarily be immaturity, rudeness, and a want of finish. There must be a lack of prudence, discretion, and sound judgment. These qualifications are the result of experience. Without them, your school may live through the summer ; but it will not be a healthy life. It will live in appearance, while the elements of corruption and decay are at work in its bosom.

Yours, &c.

J. M. M.

DISTRICT SCHOOL LIBRARIES.

A considerable number of towns and school districts, in the State, having made application to the editor of this paper, in his capacity of Secretary of the Board of Education, for information as to the best mode of raising funds for the purchase of District School Libraries, and also as to a suitable code of rules and regulations for circulating and preserving the books composing them,—we propose to reply to these applications, in a general manner, through the columns of the Journal, and then to refer our correspondents to our views, as here expressed; it being utterly impossible for any human being, though he might have as many hands as Briareus, to give full and detailed answers to all the inquiries which we are daily receiving on this and other subjects. We say, then,—

1st. All legally constituted school districts may become proprietors of libraries; they may make any by-laws for their regulation and preservation, (provided the same are not repugnant to the constitution and laws of the Commonwealth,) and they may institute or defend, in their corporate capacity, any action at law, in relation to such property.

2d. By the statute of April 12th, 1837, each legally constituted district may raise, by tax, for the purchase of a library and apparatus, a sum not exceeding thirty dollars for the first year, and ten dollars for any succeeding year.

3d. The towns, in their corporate capacities, may appropriate money to supply their district or town schools with libraries.

The above are modes authorized by law, to obtain that most valuable, and, as far as the welfare of the rising generation is concerned, that indispensable object, a Common School Library. These modes, however, are necessarily attended with some incidental expenses, and the first with considerable delay. The most prompt, effective, and satisfactory method which has yet been devised, is that of direct donation or contribution. In several instances, a public spirited individual has made a present of a library to a district, and thus entitled himself to the gratitude of contemporaries and posterity. In a far greater number of cases, a subscription paper has been circulated amongst the inhabitants of a district or town, and a sufficient sum of money raised in a few days, or a few hours,—sometimes in a few minutes, at the close of a meeting where the subject has been discussed or lectured on,—the library forthwith obtained, and presented to the district.

By the examination of the assessor's list, it can generally be ascertained, within a small sum, what each man's share of a tax for the same object would be; and each citizen may then be expected to contribute his proportion of that amount. Of course, there will be some poor people, whose share would be small, and who ought not to be called upon. Occasionally, too, there will be individuals who belong to the firm of Hunks, Shirk, & Co., who will sneak off without subscribing any thing; or who will offer some petty, evasive, and miserable excuse for doing less than their part; but, on the other hand, there will always be some generous, noble men, whose souls will be large enough to make up for the littleness of the others.

But after a library is obtained, what rules will it be expedient to

adopt for regulating the use of it, and for preserving it? In some places, very brief and simple regulations have been adopted; while those prepared by the Superintendent of Common Schools in the State of New York fill a pamphlet of *fourteen* pages.

The following, for instance, are the rules and regulations adopted in district No. 2, in the town of Canton, county of Norfolk, in this State.

Books may be taken from the library every Tuesday.

No book can be retained longer than a fortnight without incurring a penalty of six cents for each additional week.

All minors residing in the district over nine years of age, may have the free use of the library, and all other persons by paying 50 cents a year.

No person allowed to take more than one volume at a time.


Any book lost, or essentially injured, must be replaced by another, or its equivalent.

In the library of a school kept by Jacob Tuck, Esq., in Gloucester, Essex county, in addition to the regulations for taking out and returning books, &c., the following printed directions are pasted on a blank leaf in each book:—

This Book belongs to the Franklin School Library.

TAKE NOTICE.

1. This is a Good Book, and is worth READING.
2. Begin at the beginning, and read CLEAN THROUGH.
3. Read ATTENTIVELY, so that you will know, and be able to say something about it, and, especially, to put in practice any good advice it may contain.
4. This ONE book, thus read, will do you more good than merely looking over the pages, and seeing the pictures of five hundred books.
5. Use the book with CARE, so that, when returned, nobody will say it is any worse for your having had it.

 Can a book be kept in use a long time, without becoming torn, dirty, and worn out?

It is rather difficult, but not impossible. It can be done by attending to

SEVEN DIRECTIONS.

1. NEVER handle a book with dirty fingers.
2. NEVER wet your fingers, to turn over the leaves.
3. NEVER put a book to your mouth.
4. NEVER let the corners get bruised.
5. NEVER make any *dog's ear* leaves.
6. NEVER lay a book down open, with the back up.
7. NEVER lay it down ANY WHERE, except in some safe and tidy place.

The New York regulations being much more full, we will make such selections from them as will probably suggest all the topics necessary to be provided for in any district.

Previously, however, to the "Regulations," we give a few extracts from the "Circular" of the Superintendent, which accompanies them.

CIRCULAR.

As these regulations may appear minute to some, it is proper to remark, that they are intended for the organization of a new and entire system, upon a subject not well understood, and in which directions cannot be too full or too plain. Thousands upon thousands of our citizens are and will be charged with the duties to which these regulations refer; and it is by no means a depreciation of their intelligence to remark, that very many of them have probably never had any connection with Circulating Libraries, and are not aware of the absolute necessity of strict rules, and a firm adherence to them, to prevent the total destruction of their books in a few years. Complaints are already made that in several districts, which have procured libraries, many of the books are injured, and others lost, for the want of some system in their

management. It cannot be too strongly impressed upon Trustees * and Librarians, that the best system which human ingenuity can devise, will be of no avail unless it is fully and thoroughly executed. These invaluable storehouses of knowledge,—the solace of age, the guide of youth, the stay of manhood, the source of so much happiness to parents and their children,—will depend for their existence upon the vigilance of those who have accepted the sacred trust of watching and preserving them. Heavy, indeed, will be the responsibility for a neglect of those duties upon which so much depends.

The occasion affords a fit opportunity to state what means, according to the laws now in force, are possessed by districts for procuring libraries.

1st. Each district may vote a tax not exceeding twenty dollars for the first year, and a sufficient sum to purchase a book-case, and ten dollars every succeeding year, at an annual or special meeting, if notice of the object of the tax be given.

2d. The sum of \$55,000 was appropriated and paid out by the State the last year, (1838,) and the same amount was raised by the counties, making \$110,000.

3d. The same sum of \$110,000 will be distributed for five years to come, under the late act. This will average, according to the present number of children, as reported, about 20 cents to each child over 5 and under 16 years of age. * * *

The boasted libraries of the princes of the world, kept for the use of professed students, or men of science only, sink into insignificance when compared with this mighty engine of good, working directly and immediately upon the minds of the mass of our fellow-citizens. And at what a trifling expense will all this be accomplished! * * *

No philanthropist,—no friend of his country and her glorious institutions,—can contemplate these results, and the incalculable consequences they must produce, upon a population of three millions of souls, without blessing a kind Providence for casting our lot where the cultivation and improvement of the human mind is so eminently the object of legislative care, or without feeling that every citizen in his station is bound to forward the great work, until we are as intelligent as we are free. * * *

REGULATIONS

Respecting District Libraries, their preservation, and the delivery of them by Librarians and Trustees, to their successors in office; and instructions for the execution of "An Act respecting School District Libraries," passed April 15, 1839, pursuant to the third and seventh sections of the said Act; intended for the government of the officers having charge of such Libraries.

I. In respect to the selection of books for District Libraries. The Superintendent has no authority to make such selections, unless requested by the Trustees of a district, pursuant to a vote of its inhabitants. He is prepared to act on the subject as prescribed by the statute, whenever requested; but he desires it to be distinctly understood that he does not proffer his services; much preferring that the inhabitants of a district should consult their own tastes and judgment. At the same time, he is bound to see the law faithfully executed; and as jurisdiction upon appeal from the proceedings of district meetings and Trustees, as well in relation to the selection of a library as to all other matters connected with it, is given to him by law, it is proper that the principles which will govern decisions on such appeals should be known.

The object of the law for procuring district libraries is, to diffuse information, not only, or even chiefly, among children or minors, but among adults and those who have finished their Common School education. The books, therefore, should be such as will be useful for circulation among the inhabitants generally. They should not be children's books, or of a juvenile character, or light and frivolous tales and romances; but works conveying solid information, which will excite a thirst for knowledge, and also gratify it, as far as such a library can. Works imbued with party politics, and those of a sectarian character, or of hostility to the Christian religion, should on no account be admitted; and if any are accidentally received, they should be immediately removed. Still less can any district be permitted to purchase school-books, such as spelling-books, grammars, or any others of the description used as text-books in schools. Such an application of the public money would be an utter violation of the law. * * *

The Superintendent feels it to be his duty, although an unpleasant one, to caution districts against collections of frivolous works, some of which are already advertized as district libraries. The advice of persons familiar with the best works in our language should be taken in making purchases; and it is recommended that *utility* be consulted in the choice of books, rather than novelty. Works already known, and whose worth has been approved by the judgment of the public, should be preferred

[* "Trustees" in New York are nearly equivalent to our "Prudential Committee." Ed.]

to new productions, which have not attained a character. Economy, also, should be maintained in buying libraries, that the utmost benefit may be derived from the Library Fund. Those publishers who print large editions, and make calculations for forming complete libraries, can, and do afford their books much cheaper than others. * * *

With such opportunities for procuring the very best books at a cheap rate, it would be lamentable if more money should be paid for them than they can be procured for with a little effort, and it would be humiliating and discouraging, if books of worthless or improper character should be offered to those who hunger for knowledge.

II. The library is in charge of the Librarian chosen at the annual meeting of the district. * * *

Whenever the Trustees go out of office, they are to deliver to their successors all the books in the district library, with the case and all other appurtenances, and such delivery should be had within ten days, at least, after their successors are chosen; and the Librarian is at the same time to deliver to his successor all the minutes, catalogues, papers, and property, appertaining to the library.

III. Within ten days after the receipt of these regulations, Librarians having charge of district libraries, are to make out a full and complete catalogue of all the books contained therein; and when any library is purchased and taken charge of by the Librarian, a catalogue of the books is to be made. At the foot of each catalogue the Librarian is to sign a receipt in the following form:—"I, A——B——, do hereby acknowledge that the books specified in the preceding catalogue, have been delivered to me by the Trustees of School District No. , in the town of , to be safely kept by me as Librarian of the said district, for the use of the inhabitants thereof, according to the regulations prescribed by the Superintendent of Common Schools, and to be accounted for by me according to the said regulations, to the Trustees of the said district, and to be delivered to my successor in office. Dated, &c." A correct copy of the catalogue and receipt is then to be made, to which the Trustees are to add a certificate in the following form:—"We the subscribers, Trustees of School District No. , in the town of , do certify that the preceding is a full and complete catalogue of books in the library of the said district, now in possession of A——B——, the Librarian thereof, and of his receipt thereon. Given under our hands this day of 18 ." The catalogue, having the Librarian's receipt, is to be delivered to the Trustees, and the copy, having the certificate of the Trustees, is to be delivered to the Librarian for his indemnity.

Whenever books are added to the library, a catalogue, with a similar receipt by the Librarian, is to be delivered to the Trustees, and a copy, with a certificate of the Trustees that it is a copy of the catalogue delivered them by the Librarian, is to be furnished to him. Every catalogue received by Trustees is to be kept by them carefully among the papers of the district, and to be delivered to their successors in office.

IV. Whenever a new Librarian shall be chosen, and whenever new Trustees are to be chosen, and also at the expiration of six months from the time any Trustees shall be elected, all the books shall be called in. For this purpose the Librarian is to refuse to deliver out any books for fourteen days preceding the time so prescribed for collecting them together; and the books shall be thus called in at least twice in each year, at the times above prescribed. At each of these periods, and particularly when the Trustees are about going out of office, they must make a careful examination of the books, compare them with the catalogue, and make written statements, in a column opposite the name of each book, of its actual condition, whether lost or present, and whether in good order or injured, and if injured, specifying, in general terms, the extent of such injury. This catalogue, with the remarks, is to be delivered to the successors of the Trustees, to be kept by them; a copy of it is to be made out, and delivered to the new Librarian, with the library, by whom a receipt in the form above prescribed is to be given, and to be delivered to the Trustees. Another copy, certified by them as before mentioned, is to be delivered to the Librarian.

V. Trustees, on coming into office, are to attend at the library for the purpose of comparing the catalogue with the books. They are, at all times when they think proper, and especially on their coming into office, to examine the books carefully, and note such as are missing or injured. For every book that is missing, the Librarian is accountable to the Trustees for the full value thereof, and for the whole series of which it formed a part; such value to be determined by the Trustees. He is accountable also for any injury which a book may appear to have sustained, by being soiled, defaced, torn, or otherwise injured. And he can be relieved from such accountability only by the Trustees, on its being satisfactorily shown to them that some inhabitant of the district has been charged or is chargeable for the value of the book so missing, or for the amount of the injury so done to any work. It is the duty of the Trus-

tees to take prompt and efficient measures for the collection of the amount for which any Librarian is accountable; such amount, when collected, is to be applied as directed in Article XII. of Regulations No. II., with respect to fines.

VI. It is the duty of the Trustees to provide a plain and sufficient case for the library, with a good lock, if the district shall have neglected to do so. They are also to cause the books and case to be repaired as soon as may be, when injured; they are also to provide sufficient strong wrapping-paper to cover their books, and the necessary writing-paper to enable the Librarian to keep minutes of the delivery and return of books. These are proper expenses for the preservation and repair of the books. * * *

VII. The Librarian must cause to be pasted in each book belonging to the library, a printed or written label, or must write in the first blank leaf of each book, specifying that the book belongs to the library of School District No. , in the town of , naming the town, and giving the number of the district; and he is on no account to deliver out any book which has not such printed or written declaration in it. He is also to cause all the books to be covered with strong wrapping-paper, on the back of which is to be written the title of the book, and its number in large figures. As new books are added, the numbers are to be continued, and they are in no case to be altered; so that if a book be lost, its number and title must still be continued on the catalogue, with a note that it is missing.

VIII. The Librarian must keep a blank book, that may be ruled across the width of the paper, so as to leave five columns of the proper size for the following entries, to be written lengthwise of the paper:—in the first column, the date of the delivery of any book to any inhabitant; in the second, the title of the book delivered, and its number; in the third, the name of the person to whom delivered; in the fourth, the date of its return; and in the fifth, remarks, respecting its condition, in the following form:—

| Time of delivery. | Title and No. of Book. | To whom. | When returned. | Condition. |
|-------------------|--------------------------|-----------|----------------|------------|
| 1839, June 10. | History of Virginia, 43. | T. Jones. | 20th June. | Good. |

The proper width of each column can be ascertained by writing the different entries on a half sheet of paper, and seeing how much room they respectively occupy.

As it will be impossible for the Librarian to keep any trace of the books without such minutes, his own interest, to screen himself from responsibility, as well as his duty to the public, will, it is to be hoped, induce him to be exact in making his entries at the time any book is delivered; and when it is returned, to be equally exact in noticing its condition, and making the proper minute.

IX. A fair copy of the catalogue should be kept by the Librarian, to be exhibited to those who desire to select a book; and if there be room, it should be fastened on the door of the case. * * *

REGULATIONS

Concerning the use of the Books in District Libraries, prescribed by the Superintendent of Common Schools, pursuant to the third section of the "Act respecting School District Libraries," passed April 15th, 1839.

I. The Librarian has charge of the books, and is responsible for their preservation and delivery to his successor.

II. A copy of the catalogue required to be made out by Articles III. and IV. of Regulations No. I., to be kept by the Librarian, open to the inspection of the inhabitants of the district at all reasonable times. It will be found convenient to affix a copy of it on the door of the book-case containing the library.

III. Books are to be delivered as follows:—

1st. Only to inhabitants of the district.

2d. One only can be delivered to an inhabitant at a time; and any one having a book out of the library must return it before he can receive another.

3d. No person upon whom a fine has been imposed by the Trustees under these Regulations, can receive a book while such a fine remains unpaid.

4th. A person under age cannot be permitted to take out a book unless he resides with some responsible inhabitant of the district; nor can he then receive a book if notice has been given by his parent or guardian, or the person with whom he resides, that they will not be responsible for books delivered such minor.

IV. Every book must be returned to the library within fourteen days after it shall have been taken out; but the same inhabitant may again take it, unless application has been made for it, while it was so out of the library, by any person entitled, who has not previously borrowed the same book, in which case such applicant shall have a preference in the use of it. And where there have been several such applicants, the preference shall be according to the priority in time of their applications, to be determined by the Librarian.

V. If a book be not returned at the proper time, the Librarian is to report the fact to the Trustees; and he must also exhibit to them every book which has been returned injured by soiling, defacing, tearing, or in any other way, before such book shall be again loaned out, together with the name of the inhabitant in whose possession it was when so injured.

VI. The Trustees of School Districts, being by virtue of their office Trustees of the library, are hereby authorized to impose the following fines:—

1st. For each day's detention of a book, beyond the time allowed by these regulations, six cents, but not to be imposed for more than ten days' detention.

2d. For the destruction or loss of a book, a fine equal to the full value of the book, or of the set, if it be one of a series, with the addition to such value of ten cents for each volume. And on the payment of such fine, the party fined shall be entitled to the residue of the series. If he has also been fined for detaining such book, then the said ten cents shall not be added to the value.

3d. For any injury which a book may sustain after it shall be taken out by a borrower, and before its return, a fine may be imposed of six cents for every spot of grease or oil upon the cover or upon any leaf of the volume; for writing in or defacing any book, not less than ten cents, nor more than the value of the book; for cutting or tearing the cover, or the binding, or any leaf, not less than ten cents nor more than the value of the book.

4th. If a leaf be torn out, or so defaced or mutilated that it cannot be read, or if any thing be written in the volume, or any other injury done to it which renders it unfit for general circulation, the Trustees will consider it a destruction of the book, and shall impose a fine accordingly, as above provided in case of loss of a book.

5th. When a book shall have been detained seven days beyond the fourteen days allowed by these Regulations, the Librarian shall give notice to the borrower to return the same within three days. If not returned at that time, the Trustees may consider the book lost or destroyed, and may impose a fine for its destruction, in addition to the fines for its detention.

VII. But the imposition of a fine for the loss or destruction of a book, shall not prevent the Trustees from recovering such book in an action of replevin, unless such fine shall have been paid.

VIII. When, in the opinion of the Librarian, any fine has been incurred by any person under these Regulations, he may refuse to deliver any book to the party liable to such fine, until the decision of the Trustees upon such liability be had.

IX. Previous to the imposition of any fine, two days' written or verbal notice is to be given by any Trustee, or the Librarian, or any other person authorized by either of them, to the person charged, to show cause why he should not be fined for the alleged offence or neglect. And if within that time good cause be not shown, the Trustees shall impose the fine herein prescribed. Nothing shall be deemed good cause, but the fact that the book was as much injured when it was taken out by the person charged, as it was when he returned it. As the loss arising from an injury, even by inevitable accident, must fall on some one, it is more just that it should be borne by the party whose duty it was to take care of the volume, than by the district. Negligence can only be prevented, and disputes can only be avoided, by the adoption of this rule.

X. It is the special duty of the Librarian to give notice to the borrower of a book that shall be returned injured, to show cause why he should not be fined. Such notice may be given to the agent of the borrower who returns the book; and it should always be given at the time the book is returned.

XI. The Librarian is to inform the Trustees of every notice given by him to show cause against the imposition of a fine; and they shall assemble at the time and place appointed by him, or by any notice given by them, or any one of them, and shall hear the charge and defence. They are to keep a book of minutes, in which every fine imposed by them, and the cause, shall be entered and signed by them, or the major part of them. Such original minutes, or a copy certified by them, or the major part of them, or by the clerk of the district, shall be conclusive evidence of the fact that a fine was imposed, as stated in such minutes, according to these Regulations.

XII. It shall be the duty of Trustees to prosecute promptly for the collection of all fines imposed by them. Fines collected for the detention of books, or for injuries to them, are to be applied to defray the expense of repairing the books in the library. Fines collected for the loss or destruction of any book, or of a set or series of books, shall be applied to the purchase of the same or other suitable books.

XIII. These Regulations being declared by law "obligatory upon all persons and officers having charge of such libraries, or using or possessing any of the books thereof," it is expedient that they should be made known to every borrower of a book. And for that purpose a printed copy is to be affixed conspicuously on the case con-

taining any library, or on one of such cases, if there be several; and the Librarian is to call the attention to them of any person on the first occasion of his taking out a book. * * *

We cannot close this article, without congratulating our community on the increased, and, of course, the more adequate appreciation of the value of District School Libraries, which now seems to be pervading the public mind. They are of inexpressible worth. They will be hereafter regarded as among the most powerful auxiliaries in modern civilization. The Common School Library, which is now in the course of preparation, under the superintendence of the Massachusetts Board of Education, which is to consist of one hundred volumes, (about forty of which are already published,) will contain a greater amount of reading adapted to the intellectual and moral wants of the rising generation, than is now to be found in libraries of thousands of volumes. In publishing full catalogues of all the Common School Libraries which have been prepared, or are now in a course of preparation, Mr. Barnard, the able and excellent Secretary of the Connecticut Commissioners of Common Schools, and editor of the Connecticut Common School Journal, makes the following remarks:—

"We have no hesitation in expressing our preference of the School Library published by Marsh, Capen, Lyon, and Webb, under the sanction of the Massachusetts Board of Education. The works embraced are adapted to the reading of the American people, are printed with remarkable accuracy and in beautiful type, and bound in a strong and attractive manner. The Glossary, attached to each volume, enables every one to understand the technical terms, and biographical, historical, classical, and scientific allusions, which are constantly occurring in works not written expressly for the young, or the comparatively uneducated. The want of a glossary is a serious objection to all of the [other] libraries now before the public."

So superior, indeed, is this library to all others, so much better adapted to the purpose for which it was designed, that, for our own part, if all the other School Libraries were offered to us as a gift, accompanied by the restriction that we should not purchase this, we would not accept them.

What shall we think of those mothers who abandon their children to a mercenary or a hireling,—to one who has no parental affection for them, nor any knowledge how to treat them,—in order that they may have leisure to attend theatres, balls, or fashionable assemblies? Such a mother is as wise as a sparrow who should put out her young to be nursed by a hawk.

BRIDGEWATER NORMAL SCHOOL. The next term of the Normal School at Bridgewater will commence on Wednesday the 9th June next, at which time applicants for admission will present themselves for examination. The male pupils must be at least seventeen, and the females at least sixteen years of age. Each scholar is required to furnish satisfactory evidence of good intellectual capacity and high moral character and principles.

Bridgewater, May 7, 1841.

N. TILLINGHAST, *Principal.*

[THE COMMON SCHOOL JOURNAL; published semi-monthly, by Marsh, Capen, Lyon, and Webb, No. 109 Washington Street, Boston. HORACE MANN, Editor. Price, One Dollar a year.]